Barbiturates

Learning Objectives

- Identify the medical conditions barbiturates are prescribed for.
- Identify the effects that barbiturates have on the human body.

What are Barbiturates?

- Barbiturates are multi-colored pills and tablets that are classified as CNS Depressants.
- Barbiturates are often identified on the street by the color of the pill/tablet but are most often known as “Downers”.
- The most common type of synthetic sedatives.

History of Barbiturates

1862 - Barbiturates were developed by Adolph von Bayer in 1862.

1903 – Put to use for the first time in medical practices.

Since 1903 – Over 2,000 types of barbiturates have been manufactured using Bayer's original formula.

Why are Barbiturates Used?

- Barbiturates are prescribed to treat several medical conditions.
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Insomnia
  - AOD Withdrawal
- Barbiturates are also consumed to get “high”.
- Used by drug users to treat the unpleasant effects of other drugs.

How are Barbiturates Consumed?

- <u>Orally</u> – In pill, tablet or liquid form
- <u>Injection</u> –
  - Into the blood stream
  - Into muscle tissue
  - Directly under the skin
- Inserted into the body via suppository.

Effects of Barbiturates

Physical Effects

- Sleepiness
- Nausea
- Slurred Speech
- Breathing Disorders
- Reduced Sex Drive
- Coma

Psychological Effects

- Mild Euphoria
- Disinhibition
- Memory Impairment
- Increased Irritability
- Severe Paranoia
- Suicidal Thoughts

Barbiturate Testing in the Army

- Barbiturates can be detected in urine for 2-3 days after ingestion.
- The Army tests for the following barbiturates on a rotational schedule:
  - Butabital
  - Phenobarbital
  - Secobarbital
- The illegal use of barbiturates or any drug goes against Soldiers Values and Warrior Pride.

Additional Information

Additional information on barbiturates can be found by contacting the Army Substance Abuse Program or by visiting www.acsap.army.mil.